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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 007337

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LE, IR, RS, UZ, CU, KPAL, TU, CY

SUBJECT: FRANCE/GAERC: GOF MAD ON LEBANON; SKEPTICAL ON  
MIDDLE EAST; FM GOES TOO FAR ON TURKEY-CYPRUS

REF: STATE 183545

Classified By: A/DCM Josiah Rosenblatt for reasons 1.4 (B & D).

¶1. (U) We shared reftel points November 7 with MFA DAS-equivalent for the Middle East Herve Besancenot, DAS-equivalent for Iran Franck Gellet, DAS-equivalent for Nonproliferation (Iran) Philippe Errera and Deputy David Bertolotti, and DAS-equivalent for CFSP Emmanuel Cohet. Separately, we raised with DAS-equivalent for Southern Europe Marine du Carne FM Douste-Blazy's public statement suggesting that Turkey needed to recognize Cyprus by the time of the EU Summit in December.

#### Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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¶2. (C) Besancenot responded November 8 that he generally agreed with U.S. points, with two notable exceptions. On para 4 regarding implementation of the USSC Karni Plan, Besancenot said that France's priority is ensuring that the Rafah Crossing stays open. "We'll talk about Karni when the Rafah Crossing is really open," Besancenot said. He explained that the Quai is unhappy with the status quo whereby Israel allows the Rafah Crossing to open for a day or two, and then closes the crossing for alleged security reasons. Besancenot questioned the seriousness of those security concerns, suggesting that Israel was instead using closure of the crossing as a means of pressuring the PA to facilitate the release of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit.

¶3. (C) Besancenot also objected to the mention in para 5 of PM Olmert's agreement, in principle, to use frozen Palestinian customs revenue transfers to support "limited humanitarian projects." Besancenot said that agreement was "good, but not sufficient" and that all of the frozen revenues should be transferred via the Temporary International Mechanism.

#### Lebanon/Syria

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¶4. (C) Besancenot objected to the lack of mention of Israeli overflights. "For us that's not acceptable -- overflights should be mentioned in the first line," said Besancenot. He then recited the MFA's standard litany on overflights: they are contrary to international law and the spirit of UNSCR 1701; while France is sympathetic to Israel's security needs, some overflights are clearly and unnecessarily provocative; there is a linkage between ending overflights and enforcing the arms embargo; and overflights undermine the position of Lebanese PM Siniora. He complained that the Israeli Air Force (IAF) was not under adequate civilian control, noting that the Israeli MFA has told the Quai that complaints about the overflights need to be taken up directly with the IAF ) an "irregular" response in Besancenot's opinion. "One cannot simply deal with the arms embargo without saying one word on overflights," he concluded. (Comment: The French position will likely have hardened further in the wake of MOD

Alliot-Marie's public statements that French forces came close to firing in defense on Israeli aircraft. FM Douste-Blazy convoked the Israeli Ambassador the morning of November 9 to discuss the incident. End comment.)

Turkey-EU

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15. (C) Separately, we raised FM Douste-Blazy's November 8 statement that France would deem it necessary to review Turkey's EU membership timetable if Turkey did not recognize "the 25 EU Member States" by the end of the year. Carne affirmed that Douste-Blazy's statement represented "nothing new" and that France was not about to raise the ante or attach new conditions to Turkish obligations in the period between the issuance of the Commission report and the EU summit in December. She said France continued to subscribe to the common EU declaration of last year: Turkey would need to recognize Cyprus "in time," i.e., prior to eventual accession, but that the immediate need was for the Turks, in accordance with the Ankara Protocol, to open their ports to Cypriot vessels in the next month.

16. (C) Asked whether France was now in favor of suspending negotiations if Turkey did not take sufficient steps by that time, Carne indicated that, here also, Douste-Blazy had perhaps strayed a little too far. She said France would await the results of Turkish actions in the coming weeks and Finnish recommendations for the Summit before developing a firm position on next steps. That said, the Douste-Blazy statement suggests that France tends more to a harsh rather than a soft response.

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